

BRISTOL

an appreciation

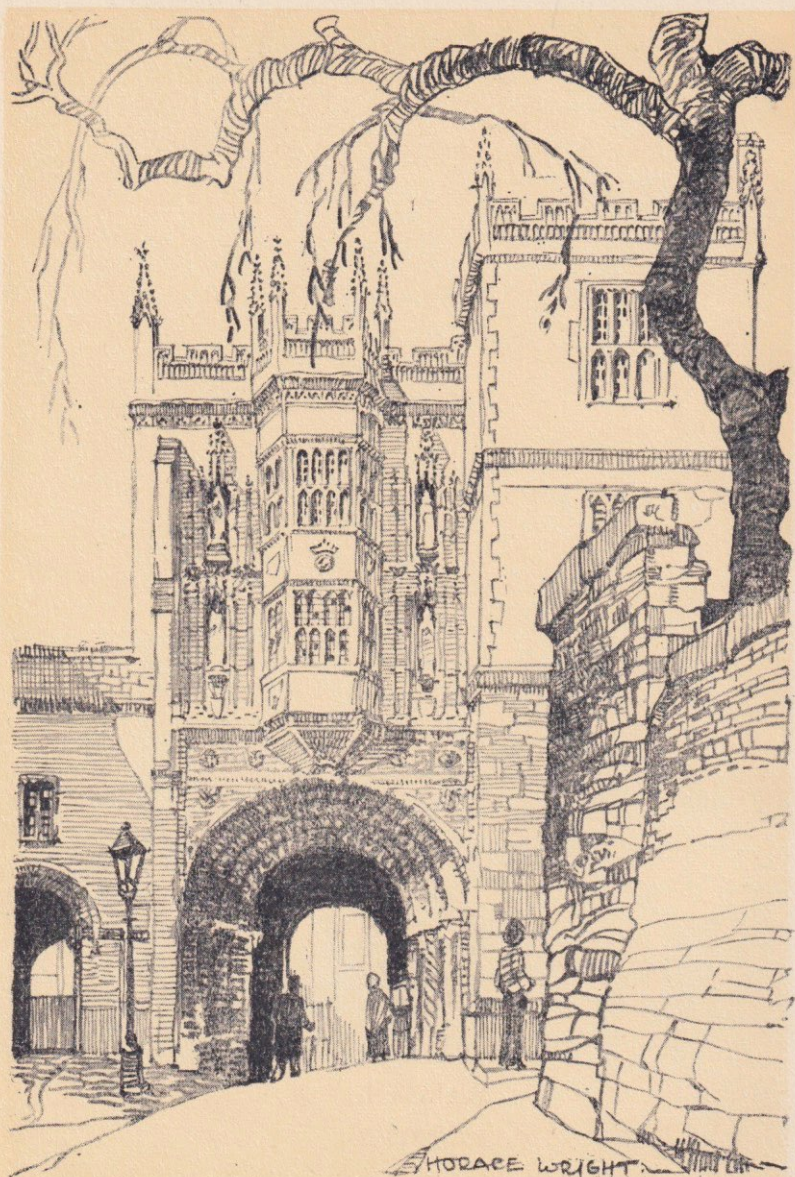


Places indicated on Sketch Map below

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| <p>A. Ancient centre of Bristol, where Cottle's bookshop and old Dutch house stood.</p> <p>B. St. John's Archway, last surviving gateway of Bristol.</p> <p>C. St. James's Church: good Norman work in nave.</p> <p>D. Broadmead Chapel, oldest Wesleyan Chapel in the world, with statue of Wesley.</p> <p>E. Site of great Norman castle.</p> <p>F. Site of destroyed St. Peter's Church and Hospital.</p> <p>G. Temple Church, leaning tower.</p> <p>H. St. Mary Redcliffe: "Fairest . . . parish church in all England" (Queen Elizabeth).</p> <p>I. Queen Square: site of Riots of 1831.</p> <p>J. Theatre Royal, oldest theatre in England, 1766.</p> <p>K. Llandoger Trow, fine gabled seventeenth century inn.</p> <p>L. Corn Exchange, best classical building in Bristol, by Wood. "Nails" outside.</p> <p>M. St. Stephen's Church, impressive tower with famous bells.</p> <p>N. Christmas Steps, quaint steep alley.</p> <p>O. Central Library, fine collection of works of reference.</p> | <p>P. Cathedral Church of ancient Augustinian Abbey. Fine Norman chapter house and Abbey gateway.</p> <p>Q. Lord Mayor's Chapel, only church in England owned by a Corporation. Interesting tombs.</p> <p>R. Georgian house, beautifully preserved. First meeting place of Coleridge and Wordsworth.</p> <p>S. Red Lodge, splendid Elizabethan house of much historic interest.</p> <p>T. University, impressive modern Gothic tower.</p> <p>U. Museum and Art Gallery.</p> <p>V. Cabot Tower, built to commemorate Cabot's discovery of the New World. Fine viewpoint.</p> <p>W. Cumberland Basin, where steamer "Great Western" sailed for America in 1838.</p> <p>X. Suspension Bridge, completed 1864, one of Brunel's major triumphs.</p> <p>Y. Observatory Hill. Fine viewpoint and site of Celtic camp.</p> <p>Z. Zoo: good collection of animals in charming setting.</p> |
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BRISTOL STREET PLAN

This is a detailed street plan of Bristol, showing the city's layout, major roads, and the River Avon. The plan includes numerous street names such as Victoria Street, Redcliff Street, and the Floating Harbour. It also shows the city's connection to Gloucester and the surrounding areas.



The Abbey Gateway

BRISTOL

an appreciation

by

KENNETH H. GREEN

with drawings by

HORACE WRIGHT

and a foreword by

J. E. Barton, M.A.



THE GARLAND PRESS

BRISTOL

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Foreword

BRISTOL is one of our very few large cities where a man might choose to live, apart from any motive of a livelihood. No big town in England has less smoke, more colour, greener trees or so blue a sky. For natural beauty in her immediate environs, Bristol can vie with any city of equal population in Europe. The romance of her long history, embodied in a fascinating blend of medieval, Georgian, and modern architecture, is imbued also with a sense of remote horizons, befitting a cradle of marine adventure and a peculiar link with the New World.

Mr. Green's compact but admirably balanced appreciation, set off by Mr. Wright's clean and pleasant drawings, offers a human portrait of post-war Bristol, complete with traditional features and honourable scars. In the art of world-wide self-advertisement, as practised to-day, Bristolians have never been sedulous: more reason, therefore, why citizens and visitors alike will profit by this timely little book, written with affection but without exaggeration.

The overseas tourist in Britain, particularly, may be drawn by these pages to see something at first hand of a place that differs essentially from the general run of either ancient or industrial cities: an epitome of our national character and atmosphere, by the way in which it has reconciled the claims of business and leisure, new commerce and old craftsmanship, respect for the past and modern aspirations.

J. E. BARTON

Bristol—an appreciation

BENEATH East River Drive in New York there is rubble which was brought from the damaged streets of Bristol during the war as ballast for cargo vessels, and the site is marked by a plaque. In this strange way the people of Bristol helped once again, though this time involuntarily and in tragic circumstances, to build foundations in the New World whose discovery and colonisation they had done so much to achieve hundreds of years earlier. So also was the name of Bristol spread throughout the world by the ordeal through which the city passed.

But though the name of Bristol is so widely known on account of her history, her merchant adventurers and her products, she is to many a name only. Even tourists by-passing Bristol on their way from the North and Midlands to the Western resorts may, if they are not too tired, think that the environs look rather pleasant, but they have no time to stop and see the city; while those passing through Bristol on some tedious night journey from the far West to London, may shudder at glimpses of lamp-lit squalor and inky canals, and sink into uneasy sleep as the train carries them away. To nearly all, however, the name of Bristol conveys something intriguing and much of magic and romance.

In contrast to the *intime* fame of Bath—that lovely and elegant but slightly aloof near neighbour with its chairs, buns, chaps and Olivers—Bristol's fame has a wider if less domestic appeal: 'Shipshape and Bristol fashion'—with a smack of the sea, Bristol 'Bullets' and Bristol 'Beaufighters' (veterans of two wars in the air), Bristol glass, Bristol board, and that delightful liquor Bristol Milk, and a host of stately hotels all over Europe called 'Bristol' (after the famous travelling earl) are a few of the many things that have spread the name of Bristol far and wide. Some, according to their knowledge and tastes, will say 'Oh, Bristol, that's where Gold Flake are made'; some, 'Isn't that where W.G. came from?' whilst others, more erudite, will mention the Cabots, Hannah More, Burke, Chatterton, Southey and the

bookseller Cottle. At all events, whether famed for merchant princes, cigarettes, slums, poets or palaces, Bristol has been and is still a place of immense importance and interest whose history has reflected much of the greatness of the English people.

Here, then, is a brief account of Bristol, which, though it does not seek to compete with guide books or the various publications on different aspects of Bristol life that are available, tries to give a general impression or appreciation, by pen and pencil, of a city which, battered though it is today, has never been more alive nor so full of those rather indefinable evidences of human activity that we call 'character'.

A city of hills and surrounded by hills, there can be no large town in England with such remarkable views. From a score of points, there are splendid prospects, but one of the best and most significant viewpoints is the top of the Cabot Tower built on Brandon Hill (with its charming Alpine gardens) to commemorate the Cabots' adventures into the New World. From that almost vertiginous height one is struck by the vast and complicated shape of Bristol, or rather that it has no shape at all, with its tumbled irregular streets, factories, networks of railways and marshalling yards, a forest of steeples—many of them rising from churches ruined by the raids—and the River Avon winding through the heart of the city and branching into docks, basins and canals before it runs through walls of rock to the estuary and the sea beyond. The stately Georgian terraces and squares of Clifton and the academic buildings round the University are in pleasant contrast to the grim industrial scene on either side of the river to the southward, where sounds of riveting from shipyards pierce the rumble and stir of the city. Out of the streets and docks rise the huge bonded tobacco warehouses which are so characteristic a feature of the Bristol scene.

Kilvert, the nineteenth century diarist, describing much the same view, refers to the '... basin and sweep of the vast smoky town and the dark battlements of the Cathedral tower rising above the avenues of College Green.'

Beyond the great sprawling mass of Bristol, where streets of

houses, like the spume of questing waves, thrust towards the summit of almost precipitous hills, the outer rim of hills appears with Dundry (where much of the oolite stone was quarried to build the medieval city churches) to the southward; the wooded Somerset hills to the west, and beyond the Downs of Clifton and Durdham, on a clear day, the mountains of Wales across the estuary. To the north the Cotswolds are visible and to the eastward lie the hills around Bath. On excellent and ambitious orientation tables the direction of a number of places is marked; for instance, Bath $11\frac{3}{4}$ miles, Salisbury 43, Wells 17, Cardiff 25, London 106, and Gloucester 31 (as the crow flies). The direction of Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Paris, Athens and Rome give the visitor a mild thrill, and, pointing westward is the proud legend 'Canada about 2,400 miles: land first seen by Cabot, 1497.' The docks below—the Haven under the Hill of Tennyson's poem—the strongly tidal Avon that meets the Bristol Channel six miles below Bristol at Avonmouth with its great modern docks, and the broad Channel, one of the Western Approaches, with the maritime cities of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea on the other side, give the clue to the existence of Bristol as a port and city.

Growth of the Port and City

ALTHOUGH the numerous city archives and chronicles are carefully preserved and analysed, yet the origins of Bristol (or Brice Stowe, the Place of the Bridge) are still rather obscure. There are remains of pre-historic camps on both sides of the Avon Gorge which suggest some Celtic settlements. Stokeleigh Camp, hidden among the trees on the Somerset side, has a fragment of dry masonry, which is rare in existing British camps. The camp on Observatory Hill on the Clifton, or Gloucestershire, side is small but fairly well defined and it must be one of the most trodden of pre-historic sites today, since thousands of strollers, sightseers and children swarm upon it and play on its banks on

fair evenings and holidays, though probably few realise that these banks were made two or three thousand years ago.

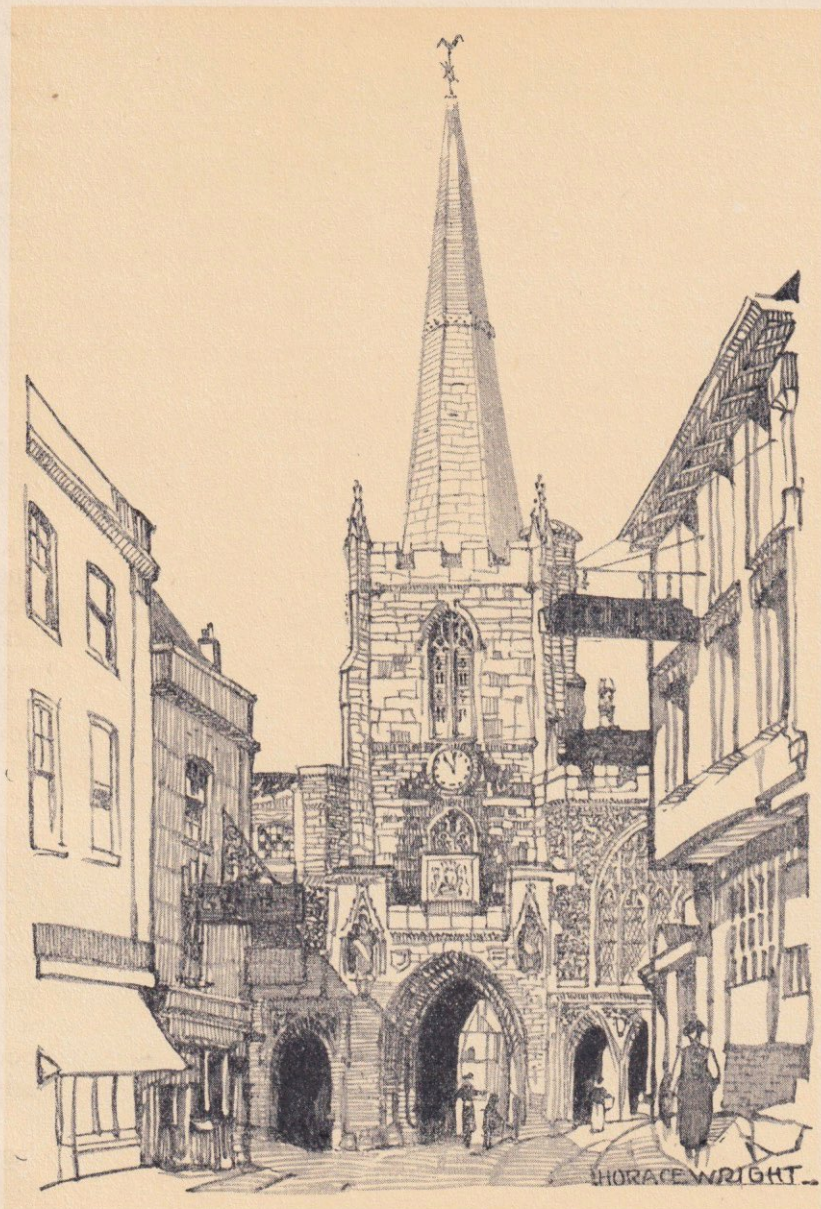
Except for the British camps which they may have adapted, the Romans do not appear to have used the site of Bristol, but traces of a settlement have been found at Sea Mills, about half-way down-stream towards Avonmouth, where coins and other Roman articles have been discovered; and there are dim traces of a road across the Downs which may have linked the little port with Bath.

The existence of Bristol and any evidence of a settlement seems to be almost entirely obscured during the dark days which followed the Roman withdrawal from Britain and before the establishment of Saxon and Danish law, when the legendary figures of King Arthur and his knights were striving to keep some at least of the Roman and early Christian traditions alive in a land of dim forests, warring tribes and paganism.

On the re-birth of law and order in the days of the Saxon kings Bristol seems to have become a more definite settlement, and there is evidence that coins were struck in the days of Ethelred the Unready, though there appear to be no Saxon architectural remains in Bristol or its immediate neighbourhood. The natives of Bristol became, with primitive commodities, sea-traders at this early period, and they even began a slave trading connection with Ireland, involving purchase and sale of large numbers of kidnapped men, women and children in the Bristol market, which was the forerunner of a trade that was to bring regrettable notoriety to the city nearly 1,000 years later.

The Normans came, and Geoffrey of Coutances began to build the first castle of Bristol, which was completed later by Robert, Earl of Gloucester. This castle, one of the largest and most powerful of Norman fortifications, stood upon a mound to the east of the city walls; but nothing now remains of it except a fragment of the gate-house which, however, withstood the 'blitz' of 1940-41 in a remarkable way, although nearly every building round it was destroyed.

During the period of the Norman and Plantagenet kings



St. John's Archway

Bristol grew to power and importance, with its great frowning keep, monasteries, churches and tortuous little streets of mud and wooden houses, until it became one of the richest cities in the country, although by modern standards it was still a small though overcrowded town with only a few thousand inhabitants. The overseas trade developed and the little river Frome was, in 1248, diverted through Canon's Marsh to provide a harbour and docks that would enable vessels to berth more easily in the centre of the city. The amazing enterprise, courage and foresight of those medieval merchants soon placed Bristol second only to London in wealth and importance, and the port became the principal clearing house of the West for trade with France, Spain, the Mediterranean and even the Levant and Iceland. Great merchant princes arose, like William Canynge, who sent forth their expeditions far and wide and laid the foundations of a tradition of business and political astuteness combined with charitable instincts on a vast scale, which has been so noteworthy a characteristic of Bristol commercial giants to the present day.

The story of Bristol is largely one of growth, development, charters, civic rights and the will of the people, which has ever sought to dominate the will of the individual. Few historical events such as battles, the murder of kings or those episodes that we are apt to associate with history-making took place at Bristol. The Wars of the Roses passed it by; but there was a skirmish during the Civil War when, in 1643, Prince Rupert stormed and took Bristol. It was recaptured two years later by Cromwell's forces. There were, of course, numerous royal visits, including one by Queen Anne, who left a large unpaid bill for drinks. The unhappy Monmouth sought to enter Bristol, but his army was turned at Keynsham and later routed at Sedgemoor, twenty miles away, which was the last battle fought on English soil.

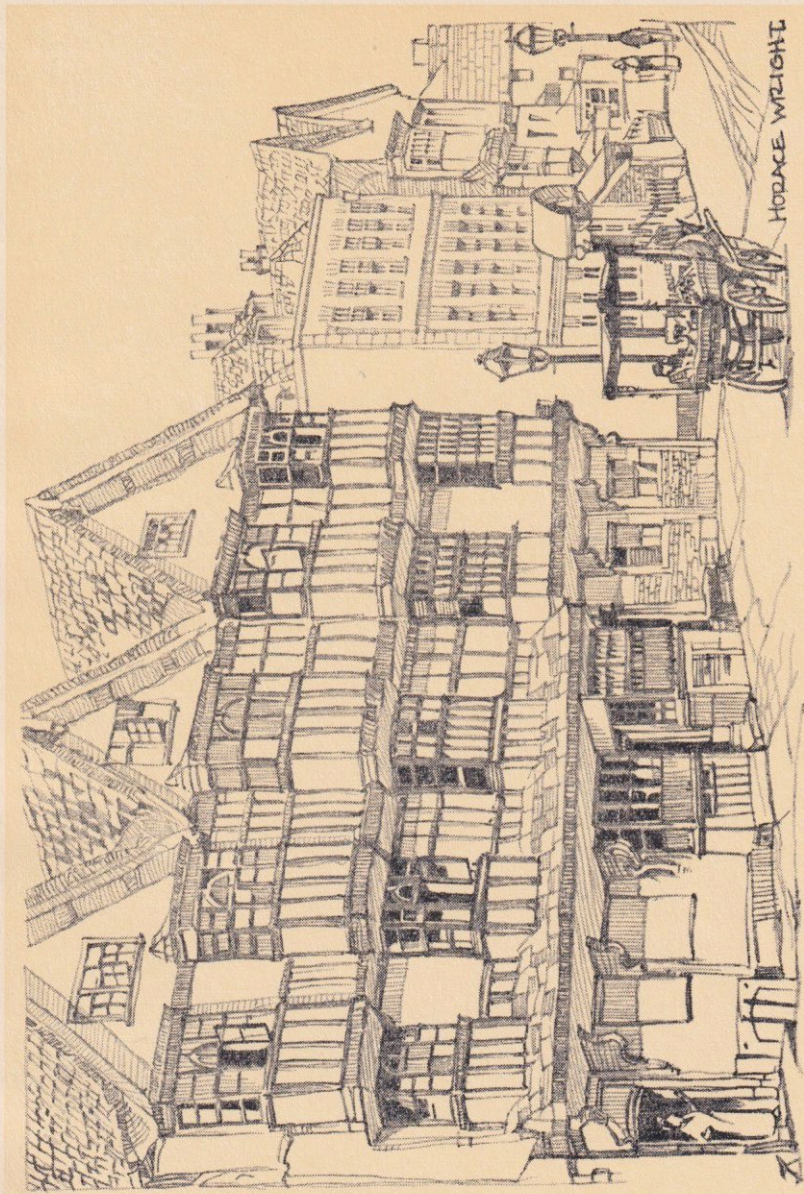
But if history was not made so obviously in Bristol as at Runnymede or Bosworth, many events occurred in the city which were of supreme importance in the sphere of human rights and human endeavour. In 1373 Edward III granted Bristol a charter in return for 'services rendered' by ships and men in

the French wars, which gave the city county status and a measure of autonomy in legal and municipal affairs. The guilds of the city became more and more powerful and the age of the merchant prince had arrived. The undisputed power of the barons had waned, and a new set of tyrants took charge. The very nature of their activities, however, drew in more and more of the common people, who had to sell their goods and man their ships and generally became executives, and whose rights and privileges had to be considered up to a point.

The high seas in those days were pirate-ridden and, for the protection of their ships and goods, Bristol merchants were given permission to fit out privateers. From many ventures the city drew considerable profit, but the great expansion in trade came with the discovery of the New World. John Cabot, sailing from Bristol in 1497 in the *Matthew*, discovered Newfoundland and a part of the coastline of North America. Indeed, his was the first ship to touch on the mainland of the New World—a momentous voyage for a vessel of only fifty tons and a crew of eighteen. Bristol has been described as the birthplace of America and a curious coincidence in the name of Richard Amerycke, a friend of Cabot and one time Sheriff of Bristol, has given rise to a theory that the new continent was named after him.

Many similar expeditions were undertaken by John Cabot and his son Sebastian and others, financed by the city merchants. Later, in the reign of Edward VI these merchants formed themselves into a guild known as the Merchant Venturers of Bristol, which was given a monopoly in overseas trading. Locally its authority was paramount, and it exerted a considerable influence on English politics. The famous guild is now a beneficent body, largely concerned with charity and technical education. The bomb that destroyed its fine eighteenth-century hall in 1940 also damaged the beautiful Merchant Seamen's Almshouses close by. Thus the fortunes of the Bristol sailor and merchant have ever gone hand in hand. Together they made the city and together they share its vicissitudes.

Elizabethan days added lustre to the maritime history of Bristol.



The Llandoger Trow

It was an era in which Bristol men were particularly fitted to live and thrive. Many further voyages of exploration (and exploitation) of the western seas were sponsored by the Merchant Venturers, and notable actions were fought with Spain which was then striving for a monopoly of trade in the New World. In the culminating battle of the Armada Bristol ships played their part.

Bristol was then a town of not more than 6,000 inhabitants, most of which was squeezed in between the walls to the north and south of the river, or contained within the narrow limits of the confluence of Frome and Avon. It was in all probability incredibly dirty and crowded with its narrow streets, timbered houses and overhung gables; its centre at the crossing of Broad, High, Wine and Corn Streets; its numerous church steeples and a forest of masts and gaily coloured sails lining the quays. Taverns would be scenes of brawling and debauchery, and the city merchant on his way to the office would have to pick his way carefully along the filthy streets and perhaps dodge the bowsprit of a barque thrust out over St. Augustine's Bridge. Yet the whole effect, even on a man with a delicate nostril like Shakespeare's, would be one of beauty, colour and shifting virile life. In those days Englishmen were said to gesticulate like Frenchmen, which would no doubt add to the gaiety of the scene. Around the lively little city stood the green and lovely hills, and Bristol was never again to present so entrancing a spectacle, unless it was in the Regency period two hundred years later, when the great houses of Kingsdown, Redland and Clifton were to appear, white and stately amongst those same wooded hills, and before the industrial revolution had begun to spread its drab warehouses and dingy streets far into the meads of Bedminster and St. Philip's.

The seventeenth century saw Bristol taking a more definite hand in the colonization of the New World. The Pilgrim Fathers were backed and provisioned to a certain extent by Bristol. Admiral Penn (buried in St. Mary Redcliffe), who captured Jamaica, was the father of William Penn, the famous founder of Pennsylvania who was married at Bristol.

The power and influence of the dissolved religious houses was past, but Bristol became a rallying point for new religious adventures, hardly less exciting and probably more significant than the adventures of the merchants. George Fox, the first Quaker, living in a period of cruel persecution by the Puritans, who themselves had suffered persecution in earlier days, was married in the Quaker Meeting House in Grey Friars.

Then came John Wesley who, in 1739, made his headquarters at the New Room in Broadmead (still preserved and the world's oldest Wesleyan chapel). From there he toured the country with his brother Charles, and Whitefield—the powerful 'big three' of Methodism. Charles Wesley's house in Charles Street still stands where he wrote those hymns that have been sung by millions all over the world.

Daniel Defoe, that prince among journalists, who, if not always strictly accurate, had the true journalistic flair for vivid summing-up, says in his *Tour* about 1726: '... Bristol, the greatest, the richest and the best port in Great Britain, London only excepted'. He goes on to eulogize the enormous trading activities of Bristol, how prodigiously it increased 'notwithstanding the great encrease and encroachment of the merchants of Liverpool...'. a warning and prophetic note that proved true enough 100 years later. But he damps our enthusiasm for Bristol later by 'the greatest inconveniences of Bristol are its situation and the tenacious folly of its inhabitants; who by general infatuation, the pretence of freedoms and privileges, that Corporation-tyranny...' prevented any but freemen from trading on their own account. This was true in a certain measure, and it was not until 100 years later that the 'pretence of freedoms' was overruled and the 'Corporation-tyranny' of the great guilds considerably reduced. After describing the town, whose population he rather over-estimates at 100,000, he says: 'They draw all their heavy goods here on sleds or sledges, without wheels, which kills a multitude of horses; and the pavement is worn so smooth by them, that in wet weather the streets are very slippery and in frosty weather 'tis dangerous walking.'



St. Mary Redcliffe from Redcliffe Parade

The eighteenth century was a time of accelerating progress and beautiful architecture—the best in the English tradition—and Bristol's new and elegant suburbs began to spring up. People of fashion took the waters of the warm springs at Hotwells and an evergrowing aristocracy of wealth built little palaces and terraces of graceful houses in Clifton. Industries grew, such as tobacco, cocoa, brass and iron founding, pottery and glass and a host of others, and coal mines in and around Bristol were developed to feed their new steam boilers. Bristol became a sizeable town of forty to fifty thousand people, prospering mightily with its American trade and so commercially-minded that even 'the very parsons talk of nothing but trade and how to turn the penny.' Connections with the metropolis and emulation of its social life had become very close and Bristolians took to 'running up to town' in sixteen hours at threepence per mile. Earlier, Samuel Pepys referred to Bristol as 'in every respect another London.'

Never had the contrast between wealth and poverty, elegance and squalor, culture and degradation been so clearly marked yet so jumbled together cheek by jowl. Slave-traders plied their loathsome trade with huge profit under revolting conditions. While Mrs. Siddons, Garrick and the leading actors of the day played at the Theatre Royal, and sedan chairs swayed among the shifting crowd, sailors drank and brawled in the taverns nearby, and genial but sinister figures like Stevenson's Long John Silver hopped around the quays where ships of all sizes and rigs and nations were moored. '... in one sailors were singing at their work; in another men aloft, high over my head, hanging to threads that seemed no bigger than a spider's ... the smell of the tar and the salt was something new; I saw the most wonderful figureheads ... I saw besides, many old sailors with rings in their ears ... and tarry pigtales, and their swaggering, clumsy sea-walk ...' A smack of rum and the West Indies did not seem far away!

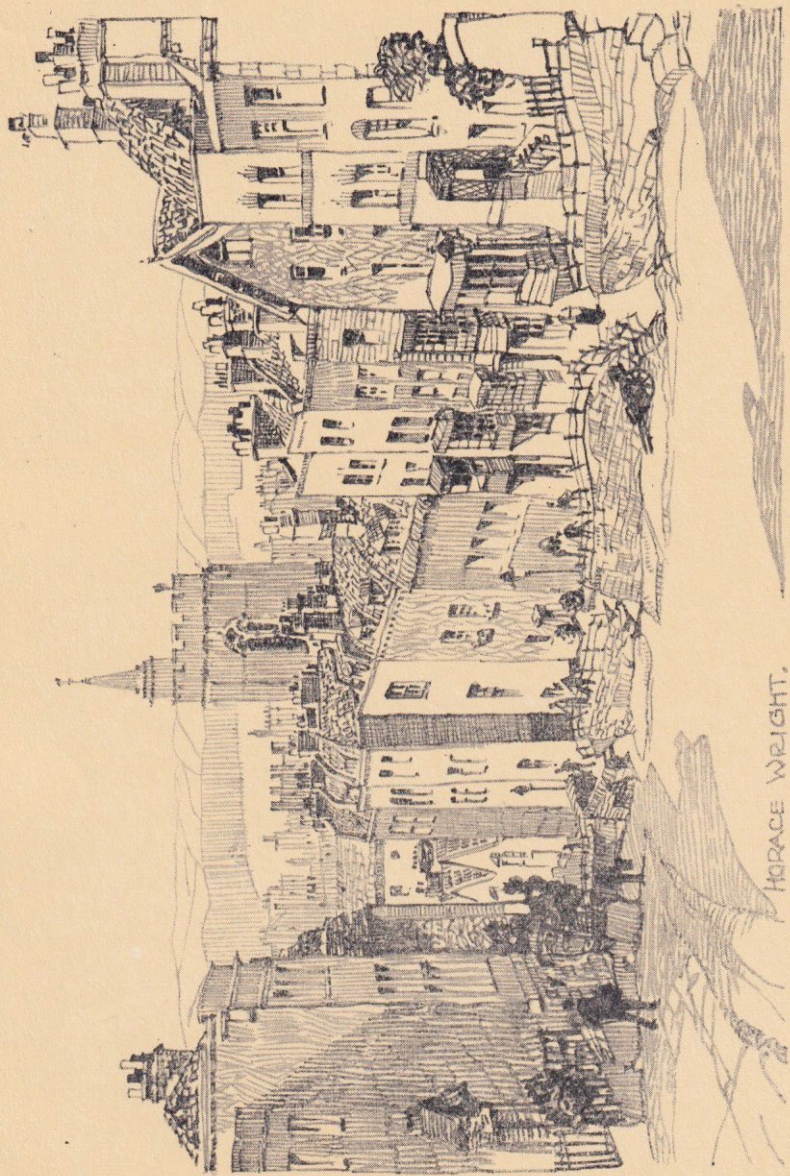
Then came steamships and railways and the face of Bristol began to change. The steamer the *Great Western* sailed from

Bristol to New York in fifteen days in 1838, the first steamer to cross the Atlantic from England. The New Cut enabling the city docks to be locked and kept at high-water level was made a few years earlier; but in spite of this and because ocean-going steamships grew too large for the twisting Avon, and the Avonmouth Docks were not erected in time, Defoe's prophecy came true and Liverpool secured the major trade with America.

But naturally the railways opened up tremendous possibilities for inland commerce, and Bristol's manufacturies developed. MacAdam, working from Bristol, revolutionized the roads during the early part of the nineteenth century, slavery was abolished, and municipal reform was expedited by the Bristol riots of 1831 (to which we shall refer later). The Machine Age had arrived and modern Bristol with its factories, Victorian palaces and villas and miles of mean streets, came into being.

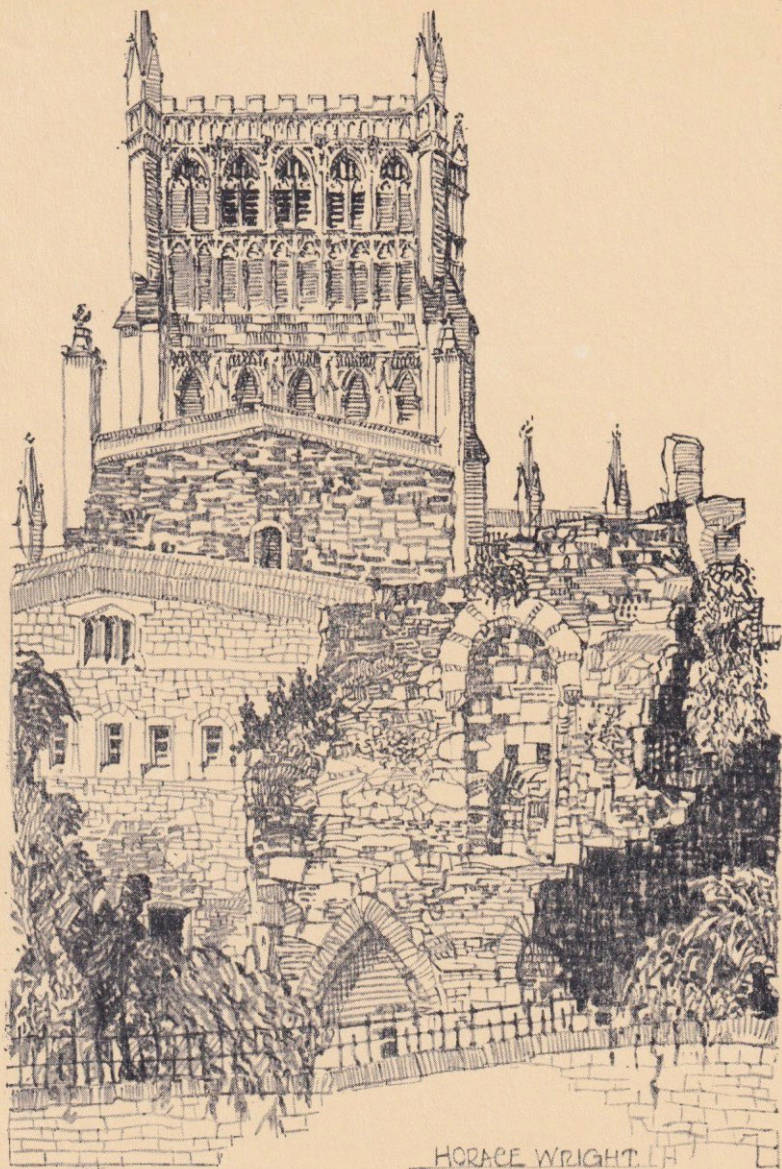
During the Edwardian period the great docks of Avonmouth were opened and Bristol developed steadily as a commercial centre, though not perhaps so rapidly as some Midland and Northern towns with their more specialized manufactures. Owing to the diverse nature of its commerce, Bristol did not suffer so severely as some places from the effects of post-war slumps. Even during the period between the two great Wars the city presented a tolerably prosperous appearance.

Though still fresh in our memory and with the wounds as yet unhealed, the *blitzes* of 1940-41 should be mentioned, for this was perhaps the most violent phase in the city's history. Like the Black Death, the terror was shared by many other towns; but Bristol as an arms city and as one of the Western Approaches for the reception of arms and fuel from America, suffered more severely than most places. Thirteen hundred civilians were killed and many thousands wounded, and an appalling amount of damage was done. During this period of *sturm und drang*, citizens tried to take comfort from the thought that post-war replanning would refresh and beautify the rather battered old face of Bristol. May their hopes be justified!



HORACE WRIGHT.

St. Michael's Hill



The Cathedral from the Abbey Ruins

The Face of Bristol

LIKE most cities of this island, Bristol does not give a very happy impression to the traveller when approaching it by rail or road. By rail, the visitor's heart sinks as he nears Temple Meads Station. By road, from the east side generally, from London and Bath, the approaches are through miles of sombre streets, whilst from the north and south, from Gloucester, Wells and Bridgwater, it is not much better. But, owing to the prevailing winds that caused factories to be built mainly on the east of English towns so that smoke would not incommode the residential districts of the west; and also because of the abrupt termination of building caused by the Avon Gorge, the western and north-western approaches are pleasant and even impressive. The wide Portway from Avonmouth Docks takes one through agreeable housing estates and through the truly spectacular Gorge itself, beneath Brunel's Suspension Bridge and past the erstwhile Hot Wells into the heart of the city, whilst the way across the great bridge and Gorge into the leafy squares of Clifton is an approach of which no great city need be ashamed. Very pleasant are many of the outer suburbs, such as Westbury-on-Trym and Stoke Bishop, where mansions and pretty villas are strewn over a sylvan and hilly landscape; while some, though not all, of the housing estates, like Sea Mills, are successful and pleasing. On the borders of Bristol and within the city boundary are some beautiful parks like the Blaise Castle estate and the Oldbury Court estate, and no large city is so fortunate in its environs.

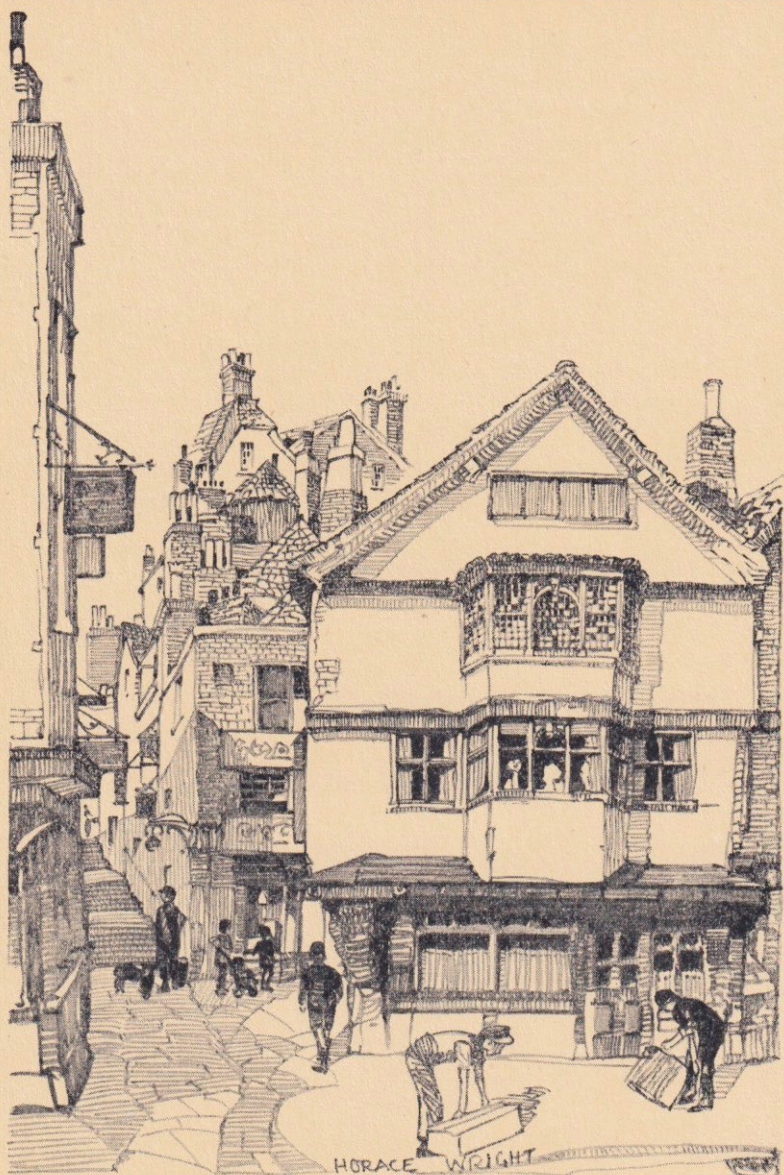
The city itself is an extraordinary mix-up of old and new. Medieval houses and churches stand wedged between ware-houses and modern offices. Church steeples grow between factory stacks, and lovely Georgian squares lie almost hidden among industrial buildings of all shapes and ages. The city Centre (where the little River Frome emerges from its underground passage through Bristol to feed the Floating Harbour) is, for a place of some 450,000 inhabitants, an unimpressive affair, and is quite unworthy of a provincial capital and the largest city, except

London, of southern England. Yet because of its lively appearance and milling crowds, of the close proximity of lovely and ancient buildings, of the towers that rise above and beyond it, and of the nearby docks with their salty flavour, there is undoubtedly a charm and excitement about the scene that makes one realize that here is no ordinary city. J. B. Priestley in *English Journey* calls it: '... an ancient capital in miniature ... both old and alive, not one of your museum-pieces living on the sale of bogus antiques.' He calls the narrow streets a 'grand muddle,' and he is not far wrong.

The wide and rather impressive Colston Avenue leads off the city Centre, and that part of it which is given over to a bus terminal and where there are statues of Colston and Burke standing among the trees, is known unofficially as 'Magpie Park', from a scurrilous newspaper that was once sold there. During the period of the *blitzes* one remembers Edward Colston gravely contemplating the effect of a bomb upon the public convenience, whilst Edmund Burke, with declamatory arm, appeared, rather significantly, to support an enormous propaganda photograph of Winston Churchill.

Most of the ancient churches, some burnt out, are to be found near or within the area of the old city wall: St. Stephen's with its graceful tower and fine peal of bells; St. James with its interesting Norman nave; St. John's on the Wall, and the curious leaning tower of the Temple Church gutted by the fire raids, to name only a few.

But the two largest and most important churches, the Cathedral and St. Mary Redcliffe, stand outside the old wall. The Cathedral Church on the site of the Augustinian abbey of which little remains but the grand Norman gateway, became a cathedral after the suppression of the monasteries in 1542. The ubiquitous Defoe, writing in 1725, says: 'There are in Bristol twenty-one parish churches, many meeting-houses, especially Quaker, one (very mean) cathedral, the reason for which may be that it is a very modern bishoprick.' Another reason for the 'meanness' was that then there was no nave, for the present nave and western



Christmas Steps and St. Bartholomew's Hospital

towers are nineteenth-century Gothic. Defoe is, however, not at all fair to the cathedral which is full of beauty and interest. The Norman Chapter House, with its interlacing arcades, is unrivalled, and the Early English work of the Elder Lady Chapel is extremely good. The Decorated period is well represented in the south choir aisle. Tombs and monuments, especially to the Berkeley family, are numerous, and an interesting attempt has been made to revive their original brilliant colouring. The fine central tower and indeed the whole building is somewhat obscured by its surroundings and by smoke and fumes that rise from the enormous gasworks behind the Abbey ruins. All this rather tends to cheat Bristol of the feeling that it is a cathedral city.

On the north side of the cathedral is College Green, flanked on one side by the new civic buildings of pleasantly simple design in brick. The inevitable statue of Queen Victoria gazes with slight disapproval towards the centre (as well she might) while behind her stands an inaccurate copy of the old Bristol Cross, the original of which used to be at the High Street crossing with Wine and Corn Streets, and which now, after some strange and untoward adventures, stands, looking rather forlorn, in the small village of Stourton in Wiltshire, awaiting, let us hope, its proper restoration. From College Green runs Park Street, a lovely eighteenth-century 'steep,' which was once the best shopping street but is now sadly ruined by the fire bombs. It is crowned by the massive tower of the University.

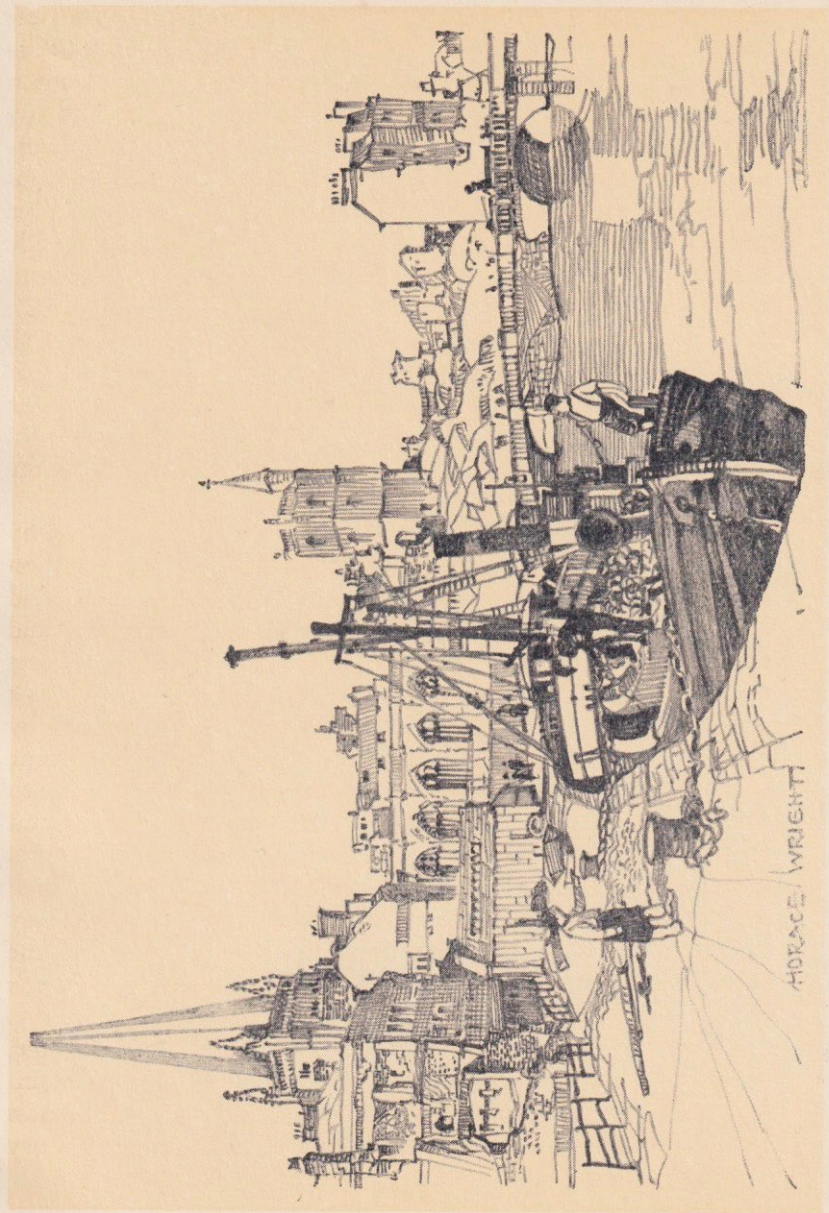
Near the Cathedral is the Central Library, a seemingly modern building which contrives to fit in well with its Gothic neighbours and contains an exceptionally fine reference library, where the system of 'open access' gives the reader the run of a collection unsurpassed in the provinces. The only church in England owned by a Corporation is the interesting Lord Mayor's Chapel, which stands on the east side of College Green.

A new road from the centre running athwart Queen's Square leads to the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, about which so much has been written that many intelligent visitors to Bristol already

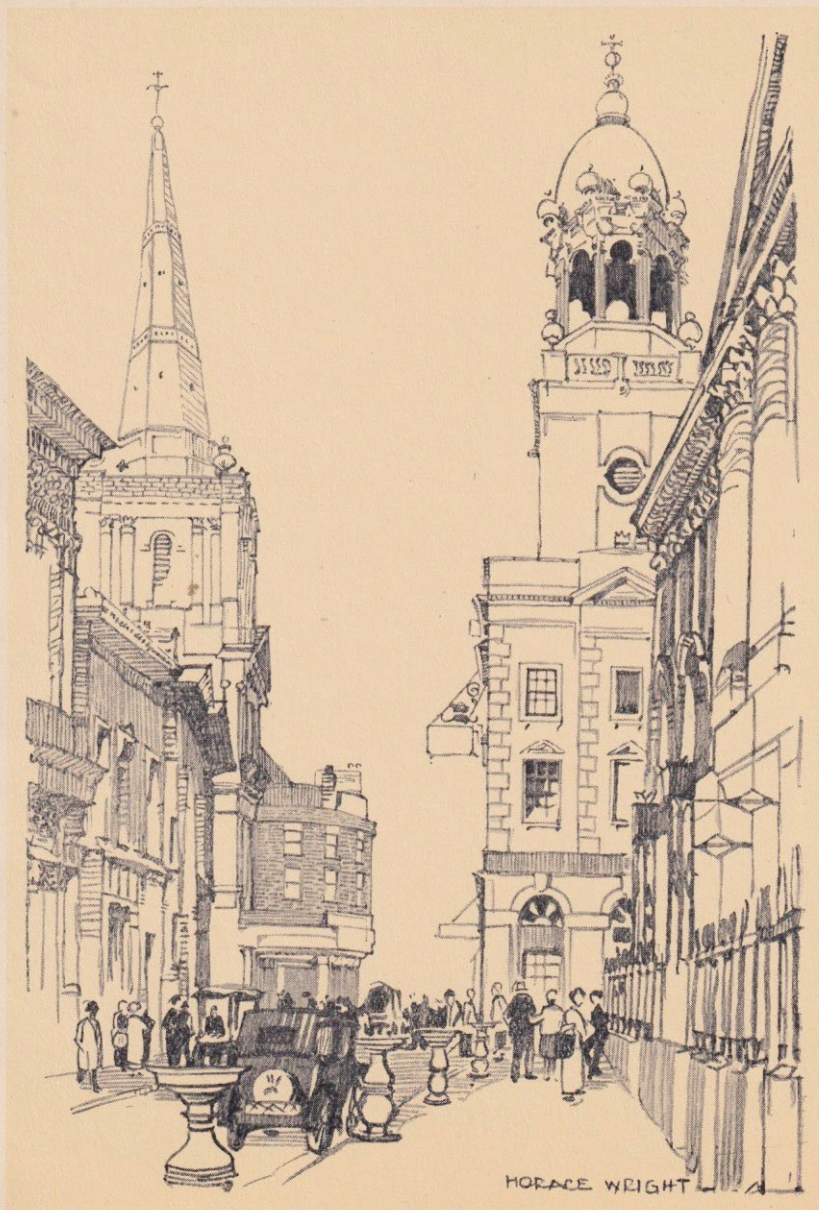
know quite a lot about it. It stands now, magnificent and unscathed by bombs, though much of the rather shabby neighbourhood surrounding it has been destroyed. The present church was built with funds provided by William Canynge, and is a perfect example of Perpendicular, that Gothic style so characteristically English. The church has associations with many famous people, notably the boy poet Chatterton, whose poems in 'ye olde' style gave promise unfulfilled because of his early suicide in London through poverty and disease; and Coleridge and Southey who were married there within a few weeks of each other to the sisters Fricker. The church is so lovely and so perfect and points a finger of such delicate grace to heaven, that one turns almost in relief to the humble little tombstone by the South Porch: 'To the church cat 1912-1927.' Opposite St. Mary's is the old and apparently leaning shot tower, one of the first to be built and still in use.

Back in the area of the city walls, Redcliffe Street is joined by the main Bath Road from the direction of Temple Meads Station (a huge grey pseudo-Gothic affair served by the G.W.R. and L.M.S. and of immense importance as a railway centre) and crosses Bristol Bridge—once a bridge of tall medieval houses packed close together like old London Bridge. From there, is a striking view of some of the appalling devastation caused by the air-raids of 1940-41. Whole streets are wiped out; some of them were beautiful, like St. Mary-le-Port Street; church towers stand isolated among rubble and weeds and a few gaunt fragments of masonry mark the places where stood big stores and glittering 'multiple' shops and cinemas, among which moved crowds of shoppers and barrows bright with fruit. Many fine old buildings were destroyed in this area, notably the Dutch House at the corner of High Street, and St. Peter's Hospital, both exceptionally fine timbered houses.

Down on the quayside and round about is more damage, weathered now and presenting a look of almost medieval ruin. But King Street fortunately escaped serious damage and contains some very fine buildings—the magnificent seventeenth-century



Bristol Bridge, St. Nicholas and the Ruins



Corn Street and the 'Nails'



inn, the Llandoger Trow; the lovely house now occupied by the Arts Council; the Old Library with its fine eighteenth-century façade, and the Theatre Royal. This theatre was saved by subscription from destruction by means other than bombing, and is now State-aided. It is the oldest theatre in England, where first-rate plays and ballets are produced under the auspices of the Arts Council in the charming green and gilded auditorium of 1766.

Queen's Square lies close by, a spacious eighteenth-century square, the original grandeur of which has been spoiled by a succession of disasters beginning with the Riots of 1831 and continuing in the *blitz* a hundred and ten years later. The riots began when the Recorder (an opponent of Reform) visited Bristol to open the Assizes. This was the signal for a prolonged mass demonstration during which the Militia fired upon the crowd, killing and wounding a large number. The rioters did not do things by half-measures and soon the Bishop's Palace (the Bishop also opposed Reform), the Mansion House, Customs House, Gaol and much of Queen's Square itself were burned down. The ringleaders were hanged or transported but the demonstration had its effect and the Reform Bill was passed in the following year.

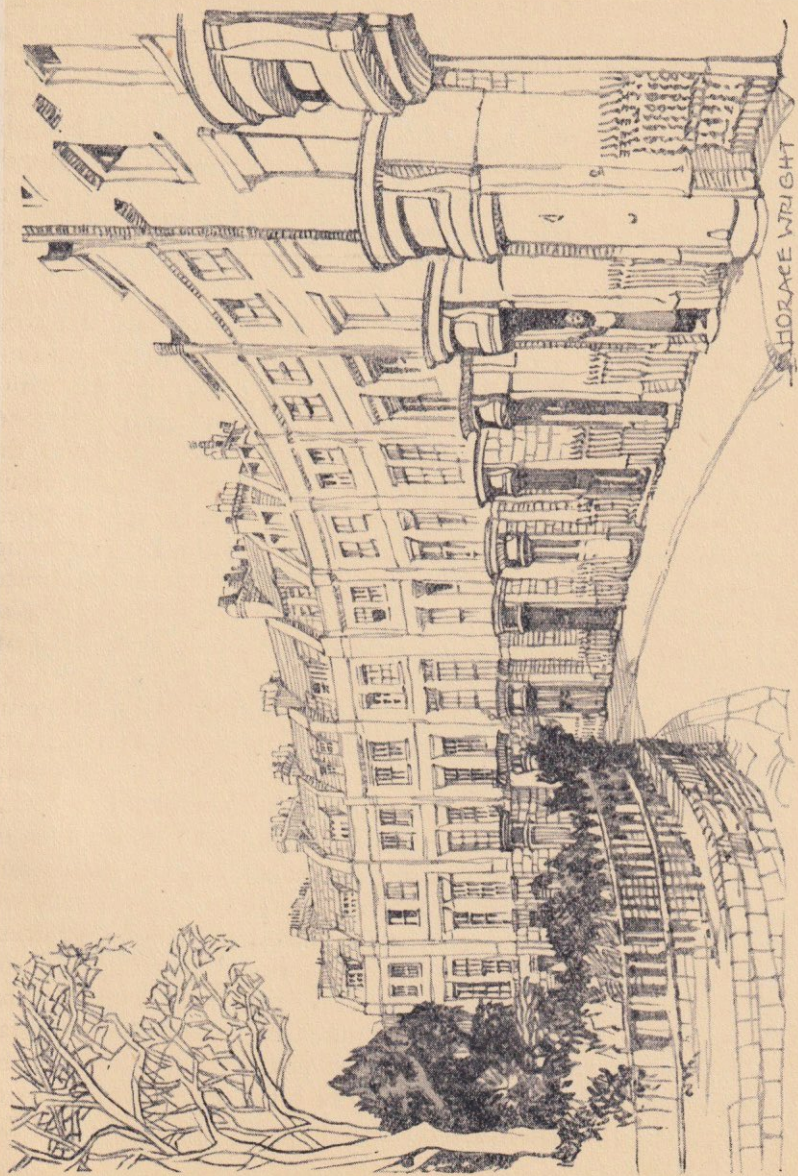
In Corn Street, where grandiose banks and insurance offices remind one of a city street in London, is the eighteenth-century Exchange by Wood, of Bath, which was fortunately not seriously damaged. The four bronze 'nails' stand outside upon the pavement and are said to give rise to the expression 'paying on the nail,' since they were used earlier, in the seventeenth century, by merchants at the Tolzey for paying and signing documents.

At the bottom of Broad Street—a particularly narrow one—is St. John's Archway, with its medieval church tower and spire built uniquely over the last remaining archway of the city wall. Beyond, and leading upwards towards the steep flanking hills are Christmas Steps, quaint and shabby, with antique shops and overhanging signs, and the ancient hospital of St. Bartholomew—now partly occupied by a fried-fish 'parlour'—at the foot.

The Mansion House, the Courts of Law, office buildings, ancient churches, many old inns (with curious names such as The Cat and Wheel and The Bear and Rugged Staff which stand next to each other) and a miniature Covent Garden of covered markets, all compete for space in this crowded city, while to the east of the site of the old market cross the buildings end abruptly and devastation begins and extends, almost without a break, to Old Market Street, a wide bustling highway which leads out towards Chippenham and London and has indeed some of the clangour of a London high road.

From its source in the Cotswolds southward through Bradford-on-Avon, thence through lovely valleys to Bath and Keynsham—‘clear and cool’ like Kingsley’s river—the Avon comes to Bristol and flows past ‘wharf and sewer and slimy bank,’ breweries, grain silos, tobacco warehouses and gasworks (one hopes that something may be made of the river bank when Bristol is rebuilt) branching into docks and basins until the ‘floodgates are open,’ and away it runs beneath Brunel’s Suspension Bridge and through the rocky Avon Gorge to join the estuary six miles below Bristol. Freighters, tugs and pleasure steamers ply up and down stream at high tide, and the night air is often filled with the blast of a ship’s siren.

Clifton Suspension Bridge, opened in 1864 but begun much earlier, has a ‘streamline’ simplicity of design which suggests a far more modern structure. The wide Downs with a multitude of pleasant walks, and the terraces of Clifton lie above the Gorge, and it is difficult to imagine a more delightful district than this Regency suburb with its squares and terraces of stately houses built of the honey-coloured freestone and set among lovely trees and gardens. Vyvyan Terrace, Lansdowne Place, Worcester Terrace and the Paragon (with its curious porches) are all good examples of Georgian, the best of urban styles in England, whilst around Clifton Parish Church (gutted by the raids) are some grand old houses of an earlier Georgian period. The smugness often associated with Cliftonians may be offset a little when they can hear the roar of lions and catch a whiff of the jungle from the Zoo,



The Paragon, Clifton

beautifully situated in their midst, and they can speculate (as indeed they did during the air raids) upon the implications of an escape by Alfred, the enormous gorilla. Clifton College is next the Zoo—a group of modern Gothic buildings, looking across a velvety cricket field, over which it was strange during the war to see the Stars and Stripes waving and to hear the yells of U.S. Army Headquarters boys cheering their baseball heroes to further violence. Field Marshal Haig was a boy at Clifton College, and there is a fine statue of him on the terrace.

The impressive buildings of the University, the Museum and Art Gallery, the Royal West of England Academy and the Victoria Rooms are all situated in the Clifton area as well as the best remaining shopping streets of Bristol, Queen's Road and Whiteladies Road.

East of Clifton, and standing high are the large and respectable districts of Redland and Cotham, with many fine and distinguished houses and some rather depressing roads of Victorian villas built in that sort of rough-hewn limestone of which one sees so much in Bristol suburbs.

The scene changes when one reaches the edge of the hill overlooking the city, for streets, often extremely quaint (and sometimes very squalid) run steeply down from St. Michael's and Kingsdown. St. Michael's Hill is one of the most agreeable features of this part, with its atmosphere of a small country town.

Indeed, there is no end to the facets and phases of Bristol and the multitudinous impressions the place can give. At times one seems to be in the city of London, sometimes in the depths of the country (as at Kingsweston), sometimes in the Black Country or in Peckham High Road; often in fairyland and occasionally in a nightmare, like the sinister derelict coal mines of Ashton and Speedwell and other ghosts of the Industrial Revolution.

Bristol has a few good modern buildings, notably in Colston Avenue, where the new Electricity Offices by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott are situated, and in College Green, with the new Municipal Buildings by Vincent Harris.

Although much could be said of the remoter districts of Bristol, so many of which are mixed up with the history of the city, it is possible only to skim over a very few. But mention should be made of Henbury in its charming setting, and Blaise Hamlet built in quaint exuberance by the Regent Street Nash and recently acquired by the National Trust; Filton with its vast Bristol Aeroplane Works and the home of many famous types of two wars; Frenchay and its lovely old houses and the Devon-like valley of the infant Frome; and Whitchurch with its civil airport.

Bristolians

MUCH has been written, and still more said, about the character and peculiarities of Bristol people. That Bristolians in the past were sturdy, thrusting and even pugnacious folk with a passion for rough justice seems borne out by the way in which new and often revolutionary causes found fruitful soil in Bristol. The Barons, the Ecclesiastics, the Merchant Princes and the Guildsmen may have been all-powerful in their time, but there were opposing elements stirring always beneath which could not be denied.

As we have seen, the Wesley brothers found Bristol a good place for their headquarters; later, Edmund Burke, the great writer and statesman, who came closer than any to the details of practical politics, was M.P. for Bristol. Hannah More was born near Bristol in 1754 and died in great contentment eighty-eight years later in Clifton. She was a practical philanthropist and a writer of widely read books on ethics, slavery and so on. She believed in the virtues of content, in sobriety, humility, industry, reverence for the British Constitution, hatred of the French, trust in God and in the kindness of the gentry! Mary Carpenter, a noted social reformer and pioneer in the better treatment of juvenile delinquents, founded a reformatory school in Bristol in 1852 (at the Red Lodge mentioned later), at first for both sexes, but the results soon necessitated a change of

policy. Plimsoll, the 'sailor's friend' who originated the famous Line, was a Bristolian. Southey was born in Wine Street and began his momentous literary career in Bristol where, with Coleridge, he discussed his Pantosocratic ideas. The bookseller Cottle, whose shop used to stand in the High Street, was their friend and publisher.

Many other Bristolians, whom one cannot begin to list, have left their mark upon the politics, progress and entertainment of the city and far beyond it; but one cannot forbear to mention the huge, bearded figure of W. G. Grace, the greatest cricketer of all time.

In the Art Gallery there is a picture called 'Some who have made Bristol famous,' which is known locally as Bristol Worthies. This shows a large group of men and women, a little reminiscent of the finale of some spectacular but solemn *révue*. They stand or recline against a classical background dressed in the costumes of all periods from medieval robes to the black-coated pomposity of the Victorian magnate, waiting rather wistfully for our applause but feeling quite confident that they deserve it. Among them you will see Burke, Joseph Fry, Mary Carpenter, George Muller, Edward Colston, Southey, Martin Pring and the Cabots, William Canynge (a most impressive figure), Sir Thomas Lawrence, Hannah More, Sir Humphrey Davy, John Addington Symonds, Irving, Wesley, Admiral Penn, Chatterton, and 'W.G.' who stands rather modestly in the background. A notable absentee is the famous eighteenth-century boxer Jem Belcher. One may speculate upon the uncertainty of a group of 'worthies,' portrayed five hundred years hence, containing any giants of this present age of standardisation and control.

Today, feelings about Bristolians are mixed, and even Bristolians themselves will complain about the characteristics of their fellow townsmen, though they would naturally resent criticism from outsiders! Commercial travellers will tell you that Bristol is a mausoleum while newcomers will rave at the slowness of the people and the shortcomings of municipal authorities. The air is relaxing and people will say that they

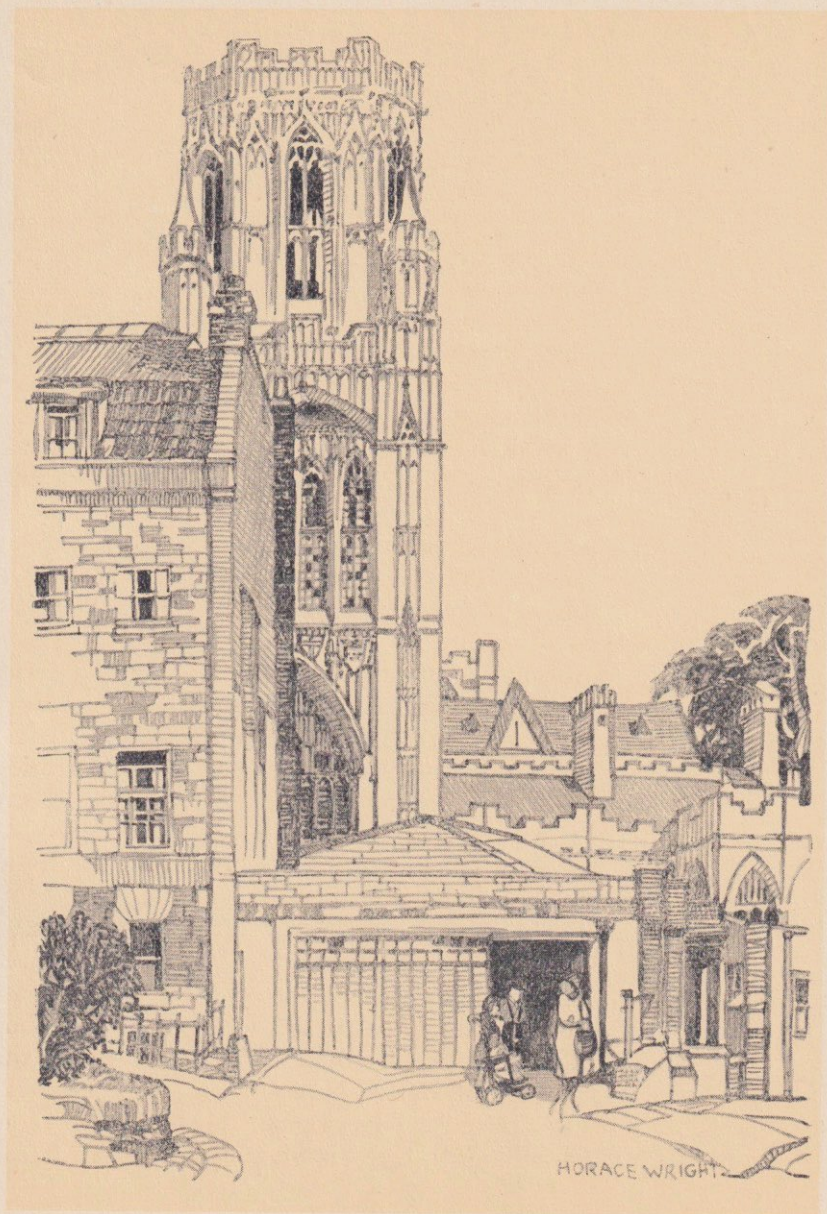
can work twice as hard in London or Liverpool. All this may have elements of superficial truth but they are the kind of things that are said of most towns.

Although it is unwise to generalize, it may be said that Bristolians are on the whole a kindly and decent lot of people, a bit casual perhaps on the surface but businesslike enough when need be. The average Bristolian is a good friend when (and this takes time) you get to know him. There is still 'plenty of good West county blood about,' as Priestley says, and there is an immense toughness, which was proved by the quiet and half-humorous defiance with which the ordinary man and woman withstood a year or so of unpleasant air attack. There is a certain type of Bristol business man, stocky and unassuming, with a twinkle in his eye, who is so tough and so solid that it would be impossible to knock him over, even if you wished to do so.

Although the power of the merchant princes is now controlled it is still formidable, and the great families such as the Frys, Wills's and Robinsons and their successors can still wield enormous influence.

Among Bristolians you will find craftsmen and skilled artisans from an astonishing number of crafts and trades, for Bristol's manufactures are diverse, like London's, and apart from certain industries like tobacco, cocoa, aircraft and printing, specialization is not so evident as in Northern and Midland towns. There are potters and makers of the most complex aero engines, of stained glass windows and candles and clogs, and indeed almost everything you could think of.

Bristol speech, in spite of modern education, is still Bristol speech, and it has some unique features. It is a kind of urbanized form of the rolling Gloucestershire and Somerset accents with features all its own, such as the remarkable business of adding and dropping l's (can it be that Bristowe acquired its l in this way ?) such as Americal, operal, Noval Scotial, ideal, etceteral, while Bristol itself reverts to its original form. Saxon idiom persists, the old-fashioned 'thee' is often used, and a football



The University Tower

enthusiast may admonish his friend thus: 'Thee casn't kick so good as thee could'st, cas't ?'

Institutions

THE cultural and institutional life of Bristol is as varied, traditional and important as you would expect of a large provincial capital a thousand years old. The University, which received its charter in 1909, is housed in modern buildings, some very well equipped (particularly on the scientific side) and it possesses a medical faculty of great importance. The buildings are heterogeneous but the group is dominated by an admirable Gothic tower of immense proportions. Bristol University serves the five south-western counties, and thus gives the lead to the academic and scientific life of a very large area of England. The Society of Merchant Venturers (changed much from its original form) conducts a large technical college and is linked with the engineering faculty of the University. There are many large schools in Bristol, among them Clifton College, and the long-founded Grammar School, Queen Elizabeth's Hospital and the Red Maids' School. The teaching hospitals are linked with the University medical faculty and Bristol is fortunate enough to possess a number of specialists of international fame. The Museum contains some interesting collections of antiquities and 'bygones' and is used a great deal for travelling exhibitions which have added greatly in recent years to its popularity and liveliness. Some good Bristol Delft ware was unfortunately destroyed in the raids. The Art Gallery, also used for exhibitions, is gradually improving and the Victorian collection enjoyed so much by our forefathers (and by some of us to-day, though apologetically, perhaps) is being refreshed by some good modern pictures which people are beginning to appreciate. The Georgian House, in Great George Street, (where Coleridge is reputed to have first met Wordsworth) arranged by the Museum authorities, is one of the best things in Bristol. There are excellent

schools of art and architecture, and the Royal West of England Academy exists for the purpose of holding annual exhibitions. The splendid Central Library has already been mentioned, but there are many district and suburban branches and these are used by an increasingly large and book-hungry public.

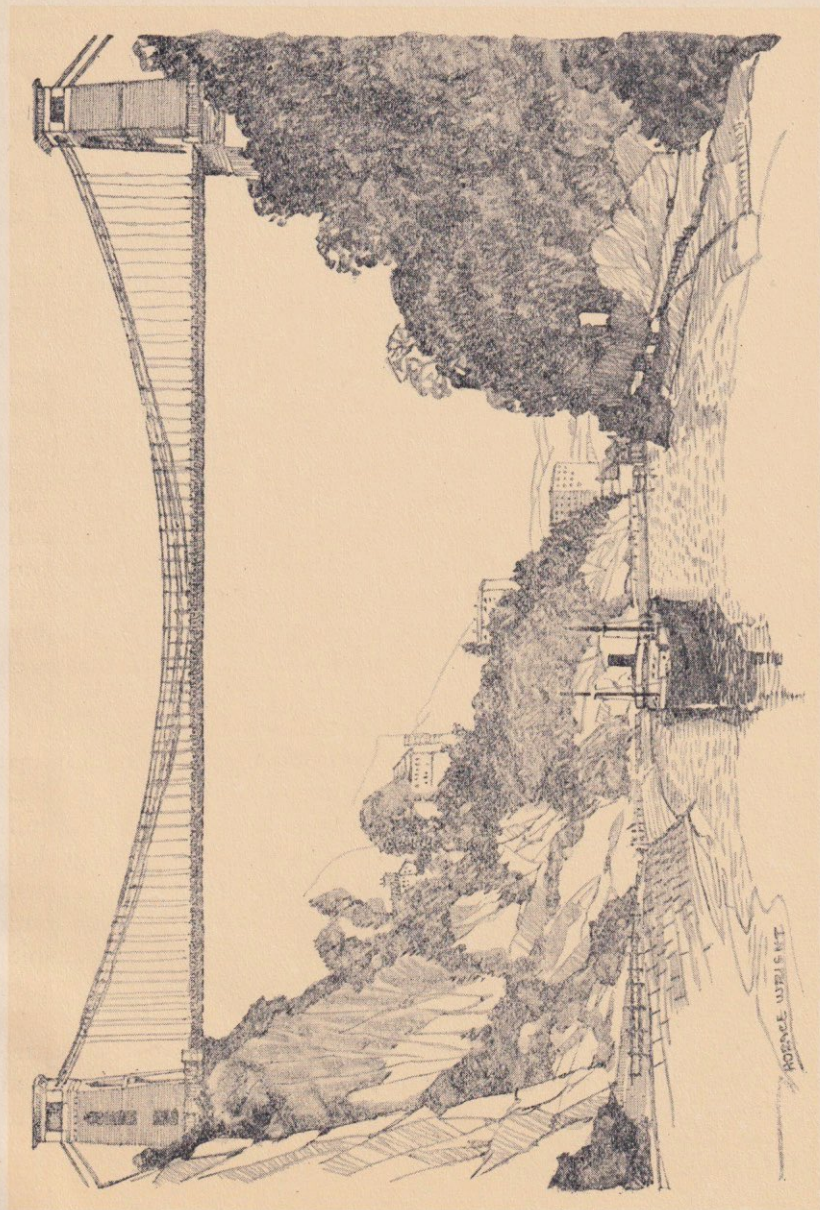
Appreciation of music, stimulated perhaps by the B.B.C. music section which came to Bristol in the early days of the war, has received enormous impetus in recent years, though the great and acoustically-perfect Colston Hall was destroyed during the War, but not by enemy action, and visiting orchestras are hard put to it for accommodation.

Indeed the people of Bristol are taking an ever keener interest in cultural and artistic matters, and, with its thriving Theatre Royal, its many musical and artistic clubs, Bristol bids fair to become culturally England's Number One provincial city.

The Bristol Savages, many of whom are business and professional men with artistic talent, meet at the superb sixteenth-century Red Lodge, with its finely-carved staircase and chambers, and there hold interesting competitions and concerts for their own and distinguished visitors' entertainment, in the trophy-hung 'Wig-wam' which is strangely reminiscent of a Munich *bier-keller*.

There are, of course, numerous clubs and lodges, political, social and sporting, or all three combined. Sport has its usual devotees in Bristol but mention should perhaps be made of an exceptionally fine series of golf courses situated upon the hills around the city, at Henbury, Shirehampton, Long Ashton, Failand and Knowle. And queerly tucked away in ancient streets are those unexpectedly impressive board-rooms with their rich carpets and shining mahogany furniture where, despite Governmental and municipal controls, the commercial progress of the city is planned and much of its destiny shaped.

There is an extremely useful Civic Development Committee which seeks to foster the expansion of Bristol's industries and to supply information to merchants and manufacturers and to visitors.



Clifton Suspension Bridge

SINCE this little appreciation of Bristol is necessarily incomplete and many interesting and important features of Bristol life have had to be omitted, a select reading list is here given for the guidance of the reader who wishes to know more.

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A few places of interest near Bristol

1. AUST: ferry for Chepstow and site for new Severn Bridge.
2. AVONMOUTH: great docks for ocean-going ssevels.
3. AXBRIDGE: quaint and ancient little town with fine church. Once a "rotten borough".
4. BANWELL: comely Mendip village with famous caves.
5. BATH: Eighteenth century spa, perhaps the most beautiful of English cities.
6. BURRINGTON COMBE: a remarkable gorge with "Rock of Ages".
7. CHEDDAR: famous for its unique gorge and caves.
8. CLEVEDON: a watering-place of some charm with fine Court, associations with Coleridge, Tennyson and Thackeray.
9. FRESHFORD: a most delectable village on the confluence of Avon and Frome.
10. GLASTONBURY: cradle of English Christendom, with ruined Abbey.
11. MELLIS: picturesque village with fine Elizabethan manor-house. Association with "Little Jack Horner" of nursery and political fame.
12. MENDIP HILLS: limestone and sandstone range of mountainous and shapely appearance and great geological significance. Caves and underground rivers.
13. PORTISHEAD: pleasant little watering-place with docks. Nearest "sea" to Bristol.
14. SEDGE MOOR: flat and rather "Flemish" plain, once mostly under water. Pre-historic lake villages. Scene of last battle fought on English soil.
15. STANTON DREW: the Somerset "Stonehenge".
16. THORNBURY: charming old town with fine church.
17. WEDMORE: a dignified and pleasant village, site of Alfred's treaty with the Danes.
18. WELLS: the loveliest of small cathedral cities.
19. WESTON-SUPER-MARE: lively and popular resort in pleasant surroundings.
20. WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE: a quaint little town and the beginning of the Cotswolds proper.

